

Connecticut General Assembly
Appropriations Subcommittee on Elementary and Secondary Education
Public Hearing
March 3rd, 2015

Hello Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Committee. My name is Adrian Colbath, and I am from Groton, Connecticut. I graduated from the Regional Multicultural Magnet School in 2013, where I attended kindergarten through fifth grade. Most of the rules I live by are ones I learned at that school: that all people are unique but equal in their rights and responsibilities to one another; that everyone deserves respect and compassion; and that we all are here to help one another achieve our goals.

I was lucky to go to an elementary school with excellent teachers, staff, and academic programs. I worked with so many teachers who cared for my future and had the kindness of a parent. Interactive learning is one of the most amazing things that helps develop your problem-solving ability. The Regional Multicultural Magnet School has that. They teach by leading discussions to find solutions to problems instead of explaining everything; that way, everyone participates. The interactive learning taking place there is what we need for future generations in order to collaborate effectively to build a better world.

The Regional Multicultural Magnet School is a very diverse place. Students enter the school by lottery, and there are all different kinds of kids there, including kids with disabilities who are supported in regular classrooms. All of the current research on education shows that diverse learning communities produce the best outcomes for everyone in that community. I can tell you firsthand that this is definitely true.

At the Regional Multicultural Magnet School, world languages and cultures are woven into classes and into the after school program, whether or not you are part of the bilingual program. They offer classes after school in Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, French, Spanish and German. All of us who have been lucky to attend the school should not be denied these opportunities, which are mostly given to kids in private school communities.

I can safely say that kids who come out of the Regional Multicultural Magnet School can compete with any kids in academics. I have friends in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade who came out of our school and who are at the top of their classes in both public and private schools. If you don't continue to give the Regional Multicultural Magnet School the resources it needs, this won't happen anymore. Kids with disabilities and many other kids won't get the education they need and deserve.

Tonight please think about the future. With all the wars in the world and global warming increasing, future generations need to be able to cooperate and solve problems collaboratively. We need schools that teach this. The Regional Multicultural Magnet School needs your help in order to give kids an education to build a better world.